

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

JASON THOMAS,

Petitioner,

vs.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondent.

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Case No. 5:04-CR-553
(Case No. 5:16-CV-2900)

OPINION & ORDER
[Resolving Docs. [41](#), [46](#)]

JAMES S. GWIN, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE:

Petitioner Jason Thomas petitions for habeas corpus relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2255. He argues that he no longer qualifies as a career offender and was improperly sentenced under the [United States Sentencing Guideline § 4B1.1; 1.2\(a\)](#).¹ The Supreme Court's recent opinion in [Beckles v. United States](#)² defeats this argument.

Defendant Thomas argument centers on the relationship between the Guidelines and the Armed Career Criminals Act.

On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court gave an opinion in *Johnson v. United States*, and held that the residual clause of the Armed Career Criminals Act was unconstitutionally vague.³ If a sentencing court imposed an increased sentence based on felonies that only qualified under the residual clause, that sentence violated a criminal defendant's constitutional right to due process.⁴

¹ Doc. [41](#). The Government opposes. Doc. [46](#).

² [No. 15-8544, 2017 WL 855781 \(U.S. Mar. 6, 2017\)](#).

³ [U.S. , 135 S. Ct. 2551 \(2015\)](#).

⁴ *Id.*

A criminal defendant sentenced under the ACCA residual clause can collaterally challenge his ACCA affected sentence in a § 2255 habeas proceeding.⁵

The Guidelines' career offender provision defines "crime of violence" using the same language ruled unconstitutional in *Johnson*.⁶ Therefore, since *Johnson*, many criminal defendants sentenced under the Guidelines' career offender provision have argued that *Johnson*'s holding should also apply retroactively to Guidelines cases.

In *Beckles*, the Supreme Court rejected this argument. In *Beckles*, the petitioner argued that because the Court's *Johnson* opinion held "that the identically worded residual clause in the Armed Career Criminal Act . . . was unconstitutionally vague . . . the Guidelines' residual clause is also void for vagueness."⁷

In answering this argument, the *Beckles* Court held that because of the Guidelines' advisory nature, they "are not subject to vagueness challenges under the Due Process Clause."⁸

The Supreme Court's decision dictates the outcome of *Beckles*-dependant cases pending across the federal courts. Accordingly, this Court **DENIES** Defendant Thomas' § 2255 petition.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: May 2, 2017

s/ James S. Gwin

JAMES S. GWIN

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

⁵ [*Welch v. United States*, U.S. , 136 S. Ct. 1257, 1265 \(2016\)](#).

⁶ See [United States Sentencing Guideline § 4B1.2\(a\)](#) (emphasis added).

⁷ [No. 15-8544, 2017 WL 855781, at *3 \(U.S. Mar. 6, 2017\)](#).

⁸ *Id.*